



News From

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Congress Passes H.R. 4, the Securing America's Future Energy Act of 2001 *Congresswoman Biggert's Legislation to Ease Shortage of Nuclear Scientists and Engineers Included in Bill*

Washington, DC – The U.S. House of Representatives voted 240-189 today to approve H.R. 4, the Securing America's Future Energy Act (SAFE) of 2001. H.R. 4 is a comprehensive energy bill that implements many of the provisions included in President Bush's national energy policy.

Included as part of the comprehensive energy package is legislation introduced by U.S. Representative Judy Biggert (R-IL13) that was designed to end a shortage of trained nuclear scientists and engineers in the United States.

Biggert's legislation, the Department of Energy University Nuclear Science and Engineering Act, would provide financial support for: the operation and improvement of university research reactors; resources for the professional development of faculty in the field of nuclear science; incentives for students to enter the field, and opportunities for education and training; and general research funds.

"Illinois relies on nuclear power for 42 percent of its energy needs and is home to Argonne National Laboratory, one of the premier nuclear energy research facilities in the country," said Biggert. "For us, the supply of qualified nuclear workers is crucial. The number of four-year trained nuclear scientists and engineers is at a 35-year low, a situation that will only be exacerbated over the next five years when 25-30 percent of the industry's nuclear workforce and 76 percent of our national labs' nuclear workforce can retire."

"Nuclear science and engineering is a discipline vital not only to nuclear power generation, but to the nuclear Navy, nonproliferation and nuclear security, and the medical, biological, and industrial applications of radiation," said Biggert. "My legislation will ensure that America maintains a competent, well-trained workforce of nuclear engineers and scientists so that we can build on the 50-year investment in the nuclear science field that we developed and mastered."

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The Department of Energy University Nuclear Science and Engineering Act authorizes \$240 million in federal spending over five years for research and fellowship programs.

“A national energy policy is long overdue, and this bill is a step in the right direction. As a member of the Science Committee, I was very pleased that the bill our committee reported included provisions to strengthen nuclear research and nuclear science and engineering programs at America’s universities and colleges,” said Biggert.

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